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AMERICAN ART IN THE PARIS SALON.

EVERY year Americans visit the Salon with high hopes that some new genius has sprung to light among our countrymen, and almost every year the honor of concentrating those bright anticipations belongs to one or another of our young Americans abroad. One year it seemed sure that Bridgman was the bright particular star of our young Occident, another year Charles Sprague Pearce gave out heat and light, then came Bicknell and then Knight; then another year Walter Gay's rich and piquant little canvases made many confident that here at last was the coming man, while this year not a few contended that in Sargent was plainly seen our Velazquez of the future.

Whatever Sargent may be, he will never be an American Velazquez. Born in Italy, educated in French ateliers, painting for Europe from Spanish inspirations, there is nothing whatever American in his art. His "Gipsy Dance" attracted considerable attention last spring—from artists as an extraordinary artistic "tour de force," from the general public as the ugliest picture in the whole exhibition. Sargent is largely "bitten" by Regnault and Fortuny, but his "Dance" would seem to indicate that he has not yet mastered their secret of chastening, or learned that breezy dash and eccentric studies of light, unrestrained, very speedily deposit a painter in a whirl of "bravura" vulgarity. In this "Dance" Sargent disdains finish for ostentatious cleverness, and the result is a rough splash of hideous forms, and of faces more like Japanese masks than Spanish countenances, with the light thrown up from invisible footlights upon the ugliest angles of a very ugly central figure. In this work everything gives way to one dominant idea; form is so much sacrificed to the play of artificial light that the dancer might be hewn wood and moved by wires, and the musicians might be grotesquely daubed jointed dolls. This may prove a genius for "chiaroscuro" and a brilliant contempt for Academic rules, but its result is certainly far from grateful to the eye and far from artistic beauty and grace.

Sargent's portrait of Miss Burchard, also shown at the Salon, was infinitely more refined, happily also more refined than his dishevelled, red-haired, vulgar portrait of a year or two ago. The young girl in this year's picture was dressed in mourning in the very latest mode, with exactly the colossal bouffant tournure that fashion put upon all lady visitors to the Salon of 1882. Artists contend that Fashion is Philistine, because it usually so entirely conceals and disguises the lines of the human form divine. Yet here was an instance which proved a fashion to be Philistine only to its contemporaries, and that, let it only be antique enough, it would become picturesque. The costume of this portrait disguised the form utterly, so that not even a foot was seen, and the lower part of the figure was a pyramid standing flat upon its base. Yet the artist had managed to give it such an indescribable quaintness of air and pose, and had treated it so thoroughly in the artistic spirit, that—in spite of its purplish, metallic flesh—one was instantly reminded of Velazquez, and could not but imagine how exquisitely quaint and strange it will seem to those who shall see it a hundred years hence.

After the picturesque quaintness of Sargent's portrait, Bridgman's "Roman Lady" had the noble largeness and dignity of antique art, even with its romantic dress and thoroughly modern and irregular face. The countenance was not exactly impressive, not peculiarly aristocratic or suggestive of grand deeds done or dreamed, but the whole picture in drapery, pose, color, form, and spirit had the grandeur of antique heroic poetry. Between these two last-named pictures exists a difference of centuries. Bridgman's large "Colza Plantation" showed the artist's complete emancipation from the artificiality of his master, Gérôme, and a breadth and vigor of movement, an artistic expansion, so to speak, that reminded one of the genius let loose from the necromancer's jar in the story of the Arabian Nights. Let us hope that the genius will never be inveigled back into the jar!

Walter Gay's little pictures were as rich in color, as facile in execution, as his work always is. Remembering his very successful "Bird Charmers" of two years ago, and looking at his little canvases of this season, one feels what a good gift to receive from nature "knack" is—the knack which, with taste and plenty of bitumen, will turn you out depth and splendor, Watteau-like grace, Rembrandt-like mystery, and Meis-

sonier-like realism, with the least possible expenditure of labor. As decorative work, Gay's canvases are always perfect, but a sophisticated picture-viewer demands that the ineffable poetry of remoteness, dreamy vistas and airy forest spaces shall be more than merely indicated by solid patches of bitumen, however adroitly illusive. There were no spaces, vistas, or distances in Gay's pictures of this year, although there was plenty of bitumen; and these remarks apply more to his work in general.

Charles Sprague Pearce's two pictures were a cabinet "Rosina," and a large "Arab Goldsmith." Neither of them suggested awkwardly posed studio models so aggressively as did the artist's more successful (that is, more successful as far as honorable mention is concerned), "Decapitation of St. John" of last year. There is an element of the commonplace in this artist's work, clever as his technique is, and one needs no stronger proof of it than the uninteresting expressionless head which he painted from the tawny-skinned, panther-eyed, elf-like Rosina, wildest and lithest of all the savage creatures on the savage isle of Capri.

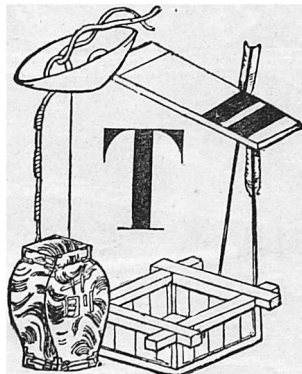
In Knight's "Un deuil" were to be seen the microscopic detail of one of his masters (Meissonier), and the porcelain finish of the other (Gleyre), invigorated and enlarged by an artistic individuality different from either. It was not a pretty picture, nor a gay one of course, being painted for tone more than for fascinating color, and bearing a melancholy title. Neither was it a sad one, in spite of its three women gazing pityingly upon a peasant girl in black sitting on gray steps, its technical purpose being so much more emphatic than its spiritual or sentimental one as to crowd the latter quite out of sight.

Frank Penfold, of Buffalo, received honorable mention for a rather depressing canvas called "Death of the First-Born." As this artist subscribes himself the pupil of his father only he may be, perhaps, considered a pure American artist, notwithstanding the fact that his work looks thoroughly of the Bonnat studio. His picture was in a low key and received its honorable notice probably on account of the clever effect of artificial and natural light, contrasted by a candle flame burning in daylight at the head of a most cadaverous and unpleasant-looking baby's coffin.

Charles E. Moss had one of those elaborately studied and composed interiors which invariably remind the spectator of a South Kensington or Cluny catalogue, or of the "Salle des ventes" at the Hôtel Drouot. Nothing could have been better than its technique, careful and yet free, even although betraying a suspicion on the artist's part that every detail of carved furniture would be looked at with microscopic eye. Its figures were so conspicuously of the Boulevard Clichy atelier that they seemed a little foreign in not being dressed in Italian peasant costumes, but the sentiment of the picture was thoroughly of the Cotter's Saturday Night and American Sunday-school order.

My Note Book.

LONDON, July 5, 1882.



HE sale at Christie's of the famous Hamilton Palace collection of pictures, furniture, and bric-à-brac, although now in its third week, is still the talk of fashionable London. It will be three weeks more before it is ended. Such an accumulation of art treasures is seldom dispersed

in the lifetime of the owner, and connoisseurs from all parts of the world are present as bidders or spectators. Naturally there are very many times more of the latter than of the former. As usual, at such sales, the lowest figures in many cases were the most extravagant. This was especially the case with the pictures. The highest prices showed, by contrast with those paid at recent sales for modern masters, that living artists of the first rank are appreciated commercially at least as highly as the most famous of the

"old masters." The highest price so far was paid for Rubens' "Daniel in the Lions' Den," which brought £5145—a picture seven and a half feet high by nearly eleven in length. It will be remembered that Ruskin recently sold his little Meissonier, only 12 inches by 9, for £600.

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THAT this matchless accumulation of centuries should be thus ruthlessly broken up is generally regretted, except, of course, by dealers and collectors who benefit by the necessities of the ducal spendthrift. This ignoble young nobleman parts with his ancestral treasures with little compunction it is said; and this may readily be believed; for his tastes, it is well known, are rather of the stable than of the salon, and horse races and cock-fights contribute much more to his enjoyment than do "old masters" and bibelots. Yet I do hope that he was able to summon a blush to his cheek when the auctioneer knocked down to a dealer for comparatively a small sum of money the miniature of "A Knight of the Garter," attributed to Holbein, which, according to the catalogue, was presented by King Charles I. to the young man's ancestor, "the Lord Marquis of Hambleton."

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RUBENS' animal masterpiece is certainly very striking, although a candid judge must allow that Rosa Bonheur paints lions infinitely better than did the famous Peter Paul. The prophet himself, who is represented sitting naked in the middle of the den, his hands clasped, and his countenance directed upward with an expression of earnest prayer, is not imposing. To tell the truth, he is very ugly and looks fat and overfed, as do indeed the nine lions prowling around him. The picture, however, is fine in drawing and superb in color, and would probably have brought more money, if it had not been known to a few connoisseurs that there is an almost identical picture attributed to Rubens—and a better one it is said—in the parish church of Godshill, near Ryde, in the Isle of Wight. The Times newspaper, after the sale, claimed to have been aware of this fact all along, but for some unexplained reason—apparently for the benefit of the Duke of Hamilton—the information was withheld from the public. Mr. Beckett Denison bought this picture, as well as a beautiful little oval grisaille, by the same master, of the "Birth of Venus," for £680. An oval portrait, in grisaille, of the Duc d'Orléans, went to Mr. Winkworth for £472 10s.

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RUBENS' "Daniel" was not by any means the only picture in the collection which is under a cloud. A portrait of King Edward VI., for instance, bought at £798 for the Queen's private gallery in Windsor Castle, was wrongly attributed in the catalogue to Holbein. It is undeniably a fine painting; but as Holbein died in 1543, when the Prince was only in his sixth year, it must have been executed by some other artist—probably by Streeter. The unchallenged Holbeins in the collection brought comparatively small prices.

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ALSO of doubtful authenticity was the portrait of Albert Dürer, said to have been painted by himself. He is represented with long brown hair, white dress and cap and brown cloak, an hour glass in a niche behind him, signed with a monogram and date 1507. Dr. Waagen considered the picture an old copy, but the auctioneer vaguely described it as "a replica, so to speak, of the picture in the Madrid gallery," and knocked it down to Mr. J. H. Pollen for £409 10s. A doubtful Quentin Matsys went for £125. This was the picture called "The Misers," representing two mean-looking fellows counting their gold pieces and entering the tally in their books. It is familiar to nearly all of us by the engravings of it. Sometimes it is called "The Money Changers."

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NEXT to the large Rubens, the greatest price was given for Hobbema's picture of a water-mill and adjoining cottages in a richly wooded country. Mr. Sedelmeyer buying it for £4252 10s., not a high price compared with that paid for "Les Moulins" by the same famous artist at the recent San Donato sale. The day previous to the present sale, standing in a knot of admirers before this exceedingly beautiful little landscape, I could not help overhearing the remarks of two

connoisseurs who insisted—with unnecessary energy, it seemed to me—that the painting had been ruined by restoration. I returned to the spot an hour later and they were still criticizing the picture. I politely asked them to be so kind as to point out where they supposed the restorations had been made, since I had carefully looked at the canvas and could find no trace of any. As they were quite unable to sustain the charge, I was forced to the conclusion that they were decrying the picture from interested motives. The report certainly got abroad that this little masterpiece of Hobbema was in bad condition, and I cannot but think it affected the sale.

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THE National Gallery will be enriched by the addition of several valuable paintings from the Hamilton collection. Passing by the three large Vandycks—none of which was in first-class condition, the large unattractive Rubens, and the wrongly attributed Edward VI.—which it was well known the Queen desired to own—Mr. Burton, who was buying for the government, secured, as his first purchase, for 470 guineas, an exquisitely beautiful little picture of St. Jerome in a cave, said in the catalogue to be by Hendrik de Bles, called "Civitta." There is little doubt that it is wrongly attributed; but as to the beauty of the picture there can be no doubt. It has indeed, in drawing and technique, all the graces of a Meissonier. Mr. Burton got a fine example of Giorgione, "Story of Myrrha," for £1417 10s.—a decided bargain. The Agnews, it is said, were asked by a customer to buy it at any price up to 5000 guineas, but declined to compete with the National Gallery. The buyer for the government, getting an unsuspected bidder to act for him, secured for £157 10s. a very desirable purchase in the large work of Tintoretto, "Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet." The canvas, it is true, was damaged and parts of the picture were obscured by a greasy coating of dark varnish; but there is no injury done to the work which the skill of a professional cleaner cannot repair. Mr. Burton bought a small portrait attributed to Leonardo for £525. When he began to bid for the large work of Botticelli, "The Assumption of the Virgin," he found a determined opponent in the representative of the French Government, M. Gauchez. That gentleman contested with him the possession of the prize up to the sum of £4725, thus exceeding his limit by 50 guineas, on his own responsibility. But Mr. Burton bid £4777 10s., and it was knocked down to him. He also bought for the National Gallery "The Adoration of the Magi," by Botticelli, for £1627 10s., and "Summer and Autumn," a monochrome by Andrea Mantegna, for £1785.

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THE great event in the sale of the furniture was the disposition of the three beautiful pieces of marqueterie made for Marie Antoinette. First came the little oblong writing-table, with drawer, and fitted with inkstand, writing-slide, and a shelf beneath, with an oval medallion of a trophy and flowers on the top, and trophies with four medallions round the sides. It bears the stamp of J. Riesener, and is branded underneath with the cipher of the ill-fated Queen and the words "Garde Meuble de la Reine." In both the wood and metal work the very perfection of the too ornate but graceful style of the age of Louis XVI. seems to have been attained. The first bid was 3000 guineas—at these "swell" auctions, by the way, "guineas" seem to be always offered instead of pounds—the next 4000, and then 4500 guineas, after which the biddings advanced by hundreds up to £5750 and then by fifties to £6000, at which sum this little table, measuring about 2 feet by 1 foot and standing 2 feet 6 inches high, was knocked down to Wertheimer, the Bond Street dealer.

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NOW came perhaps the cruellest thing of the sale. These three beautiful pieces of Marie Antoinette furniture, which had been kept together for so many years, were separated so that they will probably never again be seen in one room as they were in Hamilton Palace. The second piece was an upright secrétaire, also signed by Riesener, and dated 1790. On the front is an oval chasing in ormolu of doves (by Gouthière, the famous "ciseleur" of the time of Louis XVI.), with a quiver of arrows and flowers in a shield-shaped panel of marqueterie, and wreaths of flowers in colored woods, and baskets of flowers, fruit, and ornaments, with borders of flowers and trellis pattern in marqueterie. Fifteen hundred guineas was the first bid, from which it ad-

vanced finally to 4400 guineas (£4620) and became the property of Mr. Boore, another dealer. The last piece of the suite, an elegant little commode, dated 1791, after a spirited competition fell to M. Stettiner for 4100 guineas (£4305). Thus nearly \$75,000—the mere interest on which would suffice to keep a small family in comfort—was realized by the sale of these three small articles of furniture.

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THE prices seem fabulous. Yet, so exquisite is the workmanship that it is doubtful whether the pieces could be reproduced in the present day for less than a fourth of the sum; and there is the priceless value attaching to them of historic association. Moreover the possession of one of these gems of the French decorative art of the last century confers a sort of patent of nobility, which on the whole perhaps is not dear at the price.

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GREATER surprises may be in store; for the sale is not nearly over. Mr. Denison—an amateur who will execute his own commissions, and hence incurs the enmity of the dealers, who, by bidding against him make him pay dearly for the privilege—has already parted with the sum of 2200 guineas for a small pedestal cabinet by Boule, and before the auction is ended will have the chance of spending at least as much more on a wonderful pair of armoires formerly in the Louvre, by that famous French cabinet-maker. It requires a long purse for a man like Mr. Denison to follow his tastes as an amateur; but it requires a much longer one to afford to make his mistakes. For it is evident that this gentleman's judgment does not always equal his zeal. There were, for instance, two metal gilt chandeliers put up the other day—a large one for sixteen lights and a much smaller one for six lights. The first was a comparatively recent copy of the other, which was an original work of great merit. Four hundred guineas was paid for the genuine piece and then Mr. Denison stepped in and bought the other for 210 guineas—an unreasonable price for an imitation.

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AMONG the treasures still to be had are the unique set of life-size busts of the Seasons by Vasseur, the famous potter of Rouen; two of the fifty-two known pieces of Henri Deux ware; twenty-two lots of curious Sèvres, including two female figures 14 inches high (rare things in Sèvres), and an exquisite vase and cover, turquoise ground, 13½ inches high. There are moreover fine bronzes; a pretty ornament in silver and rock crystal, a present from Henry VIII. to Francis I.; chandeliers in rock crystal; cups in antique jasper; Limoges enamels signed by the Pénicauds and Léonard Limousin; miniatures by Hilliard, and the Olivers and Petitot; Italian cinque-cento metal work, including the Soltykoff chess-table; the exquisite statuette of Voltaire by Houdon, and a famous bronze bust of Jupiter Serapis, which has been successively in the Barberini, Portland, and Strawberry Hill collections.

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BUT among the statuary of the Hamilton sale there is perhaps nothing more remarkable than the bust of the Emperor Augustus carved from a perfect block of antique Egyptian porphyry. The work is admirably modelled, and the mounting, with its highly chased gilt metal ornaments, is not unworthy of it. Mr. Edward Joseph, of New Bond Street, secured it for the sum of 1050 guineas—a small price when one considers how extremely difficult it would be to produce such a piece of statuary at the present time, out of so hard a material as this porphyry.

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AN important sale of "Tassies" took place recently at Christie's. For those who, perchance, do not know what "Tassies" are, it may be explained that the name is given by connoisseurs to certain artistic reproductions in glass and wax of the chief European collections of cameos and intaglios, made about a century ago by one J. Tassie, who lived in the now dingy neighborhood of Soho. At his death he left his business, with a collection of 16,000 casts of gems, to his nephew, William Tassie, who increased the number to 20,000. The younger Tassie bequeathed a complete collection to the National Gallery of Scotland, and the remainder was left to the Rev. W. H. Vernon, whose executors have just disposed of them at auction at large prices.

THE materials of Kensington House, the palace built a few years ago by the speculative "Baron" Albert Grant at a cost of more than £270,000, were sold a few days ago for the benefit of his creditors. Upon the site—about seven acres—which is enormously valuable, the mortgagees are about to build red-brick mansions in keeping with the Queen Anne style of Kensington Palace. This projected æsthetic village is to be the medium of various domestic improvements, among which are mentioned the hydraulic elevator and dumb-waiter "on the American plan."

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QUITE a little stir in the art world here has been made by Mr. John A. Lowell of Boston. He has rooms in the building of the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street, where he shows a large number of Mr. A. H. Bicknell's very clever monotypes. The London newspapers speak very favorably of them—"ingenious work, in imitation of etching" the Daily News calls them—without, apparently, the least idea as to how they are produced. The exhibition is advertised as one of "American paintings," which I think is a mistake. Visitors are likely to be disappointed; for one would naturally expect to find, from such an announcement, representative oil paintings by our best artists, instead of monochromes by one man. It is true Mr. Bicknell's monotypes are done in oil; but, being impressions from metallic plates, they can hardly be called "paintings." During my visit to the rooms, several sales were made at ten and twenty pounds a picture, one of the buyers being Mr. Goodall, the well-known manufacturer of playing cards and artistic holiday cards. He was much pleased with Mr. Lowell's Christmas cards in black and white from G. W. Edwards' designs. An assortment is before me as I write. Some of the conceits are admirable, the drawing is always good and in mechanical execution the cards are excellent. Mr. Edwards is a very young man; but as was predicted in these columns about a year ago, he will certainly make his mark. As he is moreover industrious and a rapid worker, Mr. Lowell has acted shrewdly in arranging for the control of all his productions for a term of years. Mr. Edwards is now in Holland. That picturesque land, by the way, is becoming as favorite a resort for American artists as Brittany used to be.

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MR. LOWELL did a good thing for Messrs. John & J. G. Low in exhibiting with his monotypes and Christmas cards examples of the now celebrated Chelsea tiles. In the north of England the "Low Art Tiles" are already favorably known; but the interest produced by this exhibit in New Bond Street would seem to point unmistakably to success for them in the British metropolis.

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THE public here is ready to believe in everything American which is artistic. The admirable wood engravings in Harper's and The Century apparently are known to everybody in London and in Paris, too. And I may be permitted to add that the success of THE ART AMATEUR is pointed at as proof absolute of the popular interest in art in the United States. The Academy—the first critical journal in England—laments that there is no publication like it here; and in a recent number of "L'Art"—the great French art journal—there is a long article devoted to THE ART AMATEUR and its influence in popularizing art, the author regretfully declaring that France does not possess any similar publication "so important and so moderate in price."

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ARTISTIC fan-painting, as an industry, seems likely to receive a valuable impetus through the exertions of Mr. E. Barrington Nash. This gentleman, who is an enthusiast on the subject, is about to open a school in London especially for pupils in this fascinating branch of pictorial art, with a view to providing "profitable employment for gentlewomen of artistic ability, and to retain some portion of the £100,000, which enormous figure represents the value of the annual imports of fans of an artistic character into England." The sum expended in the United States in the same direction must, be at least as large, and the interest shown in the recent exhibition of fans at the rooms of the New York Society of Decorative Art suggests that the formation of a special class in fan painting, with a view of providing "profitable employment for gentlewomen of artistic ability" might be well worth considering on our side of the Atlantic.

MONTEZUMA.